



# The Irish Literary Tradition (University of Wales Press - Writers of Wales)

*J.E. Caerwyn Williams, Patrick Ford*

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Ireland is a country where for over a thousand years one cultural force has overshadowed all others: the power of a great literary tradition.

This book provides a history of literature in the Irish language from the fifth century to the twentieth. Beginning with the introduction of writing into Ireland, it traces the development of manuscripts from the early Latin records made by monastic scribes to the vernacular works of ecclesiastic and lay scholars. It shows how convention and innovation combined to produce poetry of a consistently high artistic standard within a traditional framework. The latter half of the book concentrates on the fall of the native order and a final chapter on the revival offers critical appraisals of the work of recent and contemporary Irish writers and takes up such issues as the decline of the Irish language and the future of Irish-language literature.

With a wealth of references to primary and secondary sources, this book is the first comprehensive survey of Irish-Gaelic literature since the publication of Douglas Hyde's *Literary History of Ireland* in 1899.

First written in Welsh by J. E. Caerwyn Williams and published as *Traddodiad Llenyddol Iwerddon* (1958). *The Irish Literary Tradition* has been extensively revised and updated for publication in English.

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